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ABSTRACT

This paper represents the initial step toward developing a model for retaining administrators of color at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) in higher and postsecondary education. Retaining administrators of color is an important measure for diversity in higher education. Data for this paper were derived from two Delphi studies that explored concepts for retaining African American administrators at PWIs. Each study used a panel of 10 African American administrators. In one study, the panel was asked to suggest practical steps PWIs could take, and the second study focused on professional growth factors. From the rounds of these Delphi studies, an emerging retention model was developed. The concerns of retention are captured by phases labeled preengagement, engagement, advancement, and outcome (retention of administrators of color). This paper is the first step in a long process of refining the properties of this model and testing hypotheses about their interactions. The next step will be empirical research that attempts to further classify strategies according to the four phases of the model. (Contains 24 references.) (SLD)

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An Emerging Retention Model for Administrators of Color at Predominantly White Institutions: The Results of Two Delphi Studies[1]

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An Emerging Retention Model for Administrators of Color at Predominantly White Institutions: The Results of Two Delphi Studies

Although many individual colleges and universities are giving renewed attention toward retention for people of color, key stakeholders remain concerned about institutional commitment to diversity (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999; Holmes, Ebbers, Robinson, & Mugenda, 2000; Jackson & Rosas, 1999). Indeed these institutions have focused on retention for people of color, especially with respect to students and faculty (Jackson, 2001a). Institutions concerned about increasing the overall diversity of their campuses have taken a three-tiered approach – students, faculty, and administrators. For example, the Board of Regents for the University of Wisconsin System has committed to increase the number of faculty, staff, and administrators of color in addition to (University of Wisconsin System Plan 2008, 1998). The reporters that monitor higher and postsecondary education have tagged access, retention, and advancement for administrators of color in predominantly White institutions (PWIs) an area of concern and hot topic for debate (Bennefield, 1999; Black Issues in Higher Education, 1999). Further, research-based responses to these retention questions have redirected attention toward considering retention for administrators of color as a benchmark for institutions' commitment to diversity (Davis, 1994; Jackson, 2001a).

Higher and postsecondary education literature abounds with recommendations for retaining students and faculty of color; however, little empirical or practical based knowledge is provided for retaining administrators of color (Jackson & Flowers, 2002). A major challenge for colleges and universities, as it relates to retaining administrators of color, is the application of past research studies to build a conceptual framework, while at

the same time producing more useful local knowledge for policy implementation. Toward this end, this paper begins to build such a framework, in the form of a model, by integrating the results of two Delphi studies into actionable strategies. It presents four phases, which addresses retention factors internal or external to the position: (1) pre-engagement; (2) engagement; (3) advancement; and (4) outcomes. The long-term purpose in pursuing this task is to be able to answer the question: Under what conditions are administrators of color most likely to remain at their respective predominantly White institution?

This paper represents the initial step toward developing a model for retaining administrators of color at PWIs in higher and postsecondary education. The first section provides a rationale for retaining administrators of color at PWIs as an important measure for diversity. The next section provides information about the two Delphi studies used to provide data for this paper. The third defines the four phases of the model and describes how each component works. The concluding section outlines implications for the model and prefaces a research agenda for further development of this model.

The Representation of Administrators of Color at Predominantly White Institutions: An Important Measure for Diversity

Retention for people of color in higher and postsecondary education has received increased attention within the last decade (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999). As noted earlier, the majority of this literature focused on students and faculty of color. Thus, access and retention for these two groups have been used to inform conversations of representation and diversity (Crase, 1994; Loo & Rolison, 1986). Nonetheless, there has been one glaring omission to these conversations - the

representation of administrators of color (Davis, 1994; Jackson, 2001a). The focus on administrators of color stems from two interests, one empirical and the other practical. As noted above, the empirical reason is a desire to help develop a model for retaining administrators of color at PWIs. To achieve this goal, the approach employed was to merge the results of two Delphi studies with the outcome of retention based on variables that have produced the greatest explanatory connections.

Empirically, the most insightful studies have focused on two aspects of retention: (1) students; and (2) faculty. This research has produced a greater sensitivity toward diversity as it relates to representation, but has not produced a complete explanation, which may have led some researchers and policymakers to assume that these outcomes are the most important to attain. Retention for students of color in higher and postsecondary education consists of a rich body of knowledge. This body of knowledge can be divided into three strands: (1) involvement of students; (2) validation process of students; and (3) integration of students into the university. Astin's (1984, 1996) theory of student involvement sets the stage for this line of research based on the concept that the more involved students are in college, the more likely they are to graduate. Emphasis placed on the validation of students by the institution is based on the premise that success for students of color is a function of both in and out of class experiences (Rendon, 1994). Tinto's (1993) theory of integration is based on the notion that the student's interaction with the educational environment directly affects how and whether the student persists.

The research on faculty of color focused on reasons for why faculty stay. Results for the most part, have been professional developments factors, which are strategies that could be used to increase the effectiveness of the working environment (Turner &

Meyers, 2000). Another element of diversity by representation is to focus on the group that links policy and implementation - administrators. Davis (1994) provided the groundwork for this line of thinking and work:

> . . . the litmus test for institutional commitment to diversity is the number of senior-level administrators of color remaining at the institution with a tenure of four or more years. Certainly, five years or more reflect an excellent benchmark for institutional commitment to diversity. (p. 3)

Further, Jackson (2001a, 2001b) explored environmental and professional growth factors necessary to retain African American administrators at PWIs. Although little conceptual and empirical work has yet been done on this topic, institutions are beginning to view it as useful (Bennefield, 1999). A conceptual model focused on retaining administrators not only holds the potential for moving beyond static progress for retaining this single group, but it also embeds concepts that could help to recruit and retain the other two populations (i.e., students and faculty).

The second, more practical reason arises from a concern that past research has done little to expand knowledge about retaining administrators of color in the form of concepts or models for colleges and universities. Key stakeholders on college campuses often lack information about the full range of options available for them to retain administrators of color. Many times the imposition of new programs seem to be the most feasible because it appears convenient and seemingly appropriate, except it may not be the most beneficial for those the programs are being developed.

Although these programs may sometimes be used together or in combination with other approaches, key stakeholders rarely have sufficient information about how such strategies can most effectively be integrated with one another for maximum benefit. Key stakeholders also lack systematic knowledge about the relative effectiveness of alternative programs in addressing retention for administrators of color. Additionally, there is little information about how well these programs fit with the overall retention efforts at the respective campuses. As a result, the link between research and practice is not as strong as it might be, because of the lack of information about retaining administrators of color.

Consequently, the chief purpose of this research is to expand previous work into a model that could be implemented into practice. These two approaches are not dichotomous (empirical and practice), but rather represent two ends of the same continuum. At one end lies a set of theoretical constructs; at the other more instrumental concepts, but both linked. Because the analysis for this paper is designed both to advance theory and produce useful information for decision makers, attempts are being made to draw on the strength of both approaches and negotiate these boundaries. Subsequently, the next section of this paper describes the two Delphi studies, followed by presenting the formal properties of the emerging retention model.

The Two Delphi Studies

Data for this paper were derived from two Delphi studies that explored concepts for retaining African American administrators at PWIs. Both studies were guided by the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, and similar research methodologies. Motivation-Hygiene Theory was chosen because it provided a connection to job satisfaction and the bifurcated

nature of the theory addressed both professional growth factors and environmental factors (Herzberg, Mausner, & Syndermen 1964; Herzberg 1979; Herzberg, Mathapo, & Wiener 1974). The Delphi technique was chosen because the literature provided little guidance on studying this topic, and it provided the opportunity to explore this topic without claiming to be an expert on it, thus the use of a panel of experts (Clayton, 1997).

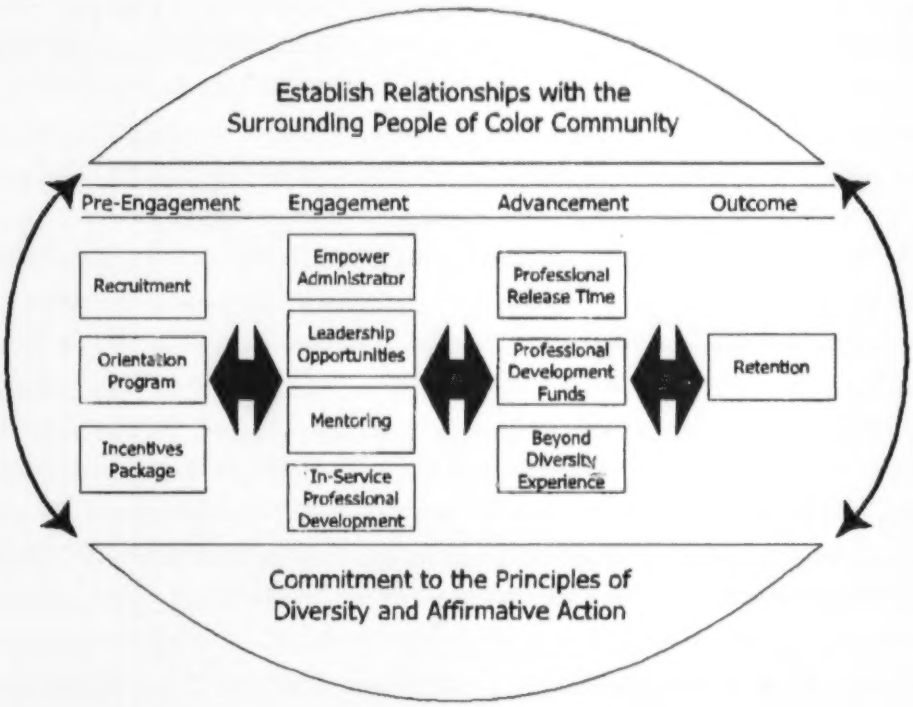
The initial study asked the panel of experts to suggest practical steps that PWIs could implement to retain African American administrators at PWIs (Jackson, 2001a). After analyzing these data and comparing it with Motivation-Hygiene Theory, only two of the 10 steps loosely addressed motivation. Therefore, the second study focused specifically on professional growth factors, thus asking the panel of experts to suggest professional growth strategies that PWIs could use to help retain African American administrators (Jackson, 2001b). An abridged version of the methodology section follows (for a fuller treatment please see Jackson, 2001a, 2001b).

Both studies used a panel of 10 African American administrators employed at PWIs. They were located at public 4-year institutions throughout the United States with a student of color population of 10% or less. Panelist were selected based on the tenets of purposeful sampling which included finding typical cases where the African American administrator satisfied the criterion of a senior administrator (dean level of above). A modified, two round Delphi method was used to collect data for each study (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafsun, 1975). The first round used an open-ended question to obtain opinions from the panel of experts (Murry & Hammons, 1995). In the second round, panelist were asked to rank, edit, and comment on the strategies from the first round. Data were analyzed using traditional methods of qualitative research (Keeves, 1988).

The Emerging Retention Model

This model represents an initial attempt to consolidate previous research to develop a heuristic tool for colleges and universities vested in retaining administrators of color at PWIs. Further, the model will undoubtedly be reshaped by future research surrounding this topic, by this researcher, and others interested in this topic. This work is concerned about the range of options available for addressing the research problem, the underlying theoretical premises of those options, the fit between the problem and options, and the implementation problems associated with the task of retaining administrators of color at PWIs. The concerns of retention can be captured by a set of phases, which have been labeled: pre-engagement; engagement; advancement; and outcome (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. An Emerging Model for Retaining Administrators of Color at Predominantly White Institutions



The components of the four phases are surrounded by two foundational concepts that are critical to the implementation of this model. First, it is suggested that colleges and universities establish relationships with the surrounding people of color community. Participation in local community organizations, businesses, and industries could assist in forming a sense of connection between the administrator and the community. This connection could serve dual purposes: (1) provide a community for the administrator to interact with, particularly if a concentration of people of color do not exist on campus; and (2) develop a positive rapport between the college or university with the people of color community. Second, colleges and universities should commit to the principles of diversity and affirmative action. One gesture could be simply to add a diversity educational component to all institutional training programs for its personnel. It would send a message that the institution truly wishes its members to be understanding of differences and appreciative of those differences. But more importantly, it shows that the institution values the people of color experience and perspective. The following phases and properties for retention emerged from the two Delphi studies previously described in this paper.

Pre-Engagement Phase

Pre-engagement is the phase that the institution enters with the potential candidate prior to their arrival to the campus. It is a critical phase because it sets the stage for the remaining phases. The first component in phase one is recruitment. The primary focus of this component is to use recruitment as a retention tool. Retention of administrators of color begins with an institution's recruitment and hiring practices. Colleges and universities with well thought out and printed practices for recruiting and hiring people of

color are more likely to send a positive, welcoming, and supportive message to potential colleagues.

Component two is the establishment of an orientation program. The orientation program should at least cover two aspects: (1) community; and (2) campus orientation. Community orientation could entail the community leadership introducing the new administrator to the community, in addition to informing the new administrator about the present network systems (e.g., churches and social groups). Orientation at the campus level could be actualized into a reception to introduce the administrator to the students, faculty, and staff of the college or university. Further, this might also include a series of sessions to acclimate the administrator to various aspects of the college or university.

Providing a competitive incentives package is component three. The professional relationship with the administrator of color is shaped in the negotiation process. Institutions should make every attempt to provide competitive wages and salaries, because it shows a commitment to the person in the position. Often administrators can be lured away by other institutions willing to offer more benefits; therefore, financial packages have to be sufficient and equitable. Additionally, timely and sufficient increases are important aspects as well.

Engagement Phase

Engagement occurs when the administrator of color assumes the official responsibilities of his or her position. During this phase the administrator becomes engaged with the campus community and take on his or her assigned roles and responsibilities. Further, the administrator engages the community and becomes a member with full rights and privileges. Component one within this phase is to empower

the administrator; this entails affording the administrator of color the power and authority to give direction to his or her operating unit. More basically, this gesture does two things: (1) shows the institution has confidence in the administrator of color; and (2) permits the administrator of color to carry out the responsibilities of the job he or she was hired to do.

Component two is leadership opportunities. An appealing aspect for recruiting and retaining any administrator is the possibility of receiving a full range of leadership opportunities at the respective institution. Job enlargement will ideally groom the administrator of color for job advancement within the institution. One cautionary note is to make these leadership opportunities available gradually, because the administrator is becoming familiar with the university and his or her job. The goal is to prevent the administrator from being overwhelmed and placed in a position where he or she would not be able to take advantage of the leadership opportunities provided.

Mentoring is the third component within the engagement phase. Institutions that develop mentoring programs focused on career and academic development for administrators of color, not only provide a critical aspect for professional development, but also an often over looked aspect of retention. The administrator of color should be partnered with one or more seasoned administrators for guidance and advice. Formal and informal mentors ideally would play a critical role in the administrator's pursuit of his or her career aspirations. Moreover, these mentors could provide local knowledge about the political environment, helpful hints in reference to acclimating to the campus culture, and any other in-depth piece of knowledge that would enable the administrator of color to perform his or her.

The last component of the engagement phase is in-service professional development. In-service professional development can be quite helpful in supplementing the skills the administrator of color brought to the job with context-specific information. Furthermore, these sessions could serve as an excellent cross-campus networking opportunity. In order to provide useful in-service professional development, two points should be noted: (1) training should be in alignment with the position the administrator of color holds; and (2) training should be developed specifically for people of color.

Advancement Phase

Advancement, which is phase three, is very important as it relates to providing growth for administrators of color and ultimately retaining them. Opportunities for and the possibility of advancement at one's respective institution minimize the need to move solely for professional advancement. The first component of the advancement phase deals with providing professional release time for the administrator of color, this component suggests two kinds of release time. First, release time to pursue research and professional development activities. This aspect is especially important for administrators who would like to remain active with their scholarship and professional organizations. Second, monthly release time as a substitute for additional hours worked (e.g., advising) with underrepresented student populations. Time adjustments such as this will permit administrators of color who are interested in connecting with the student of color population sufficient time to do so.

Providing professional development funding is component two of this phase. Institutions should support and endorse professional development for their administrators of color. For example, joining national organizations and attending their meetings allow

these administrators to maintain affiliations with multicultural subgroups within these organizations. Further, opportunities such as these could enhance skills that may or may not be utilized on campus.

The final component of this phase is providing professional experiences beyond the diversity mission of the institution. Providing these experiences can be quite critical in future professional advancement. More often than not, administrators of color get locked into positions that have a significant portion of their time dedicated to diversity related issues. Moving beyond diversity experiences will help the administrator gain a better understanding of the method of operations for the whole campus. Insights gained into the challenges encountered by other aspects of the campus, are helpful when advancing to higher-level positions.

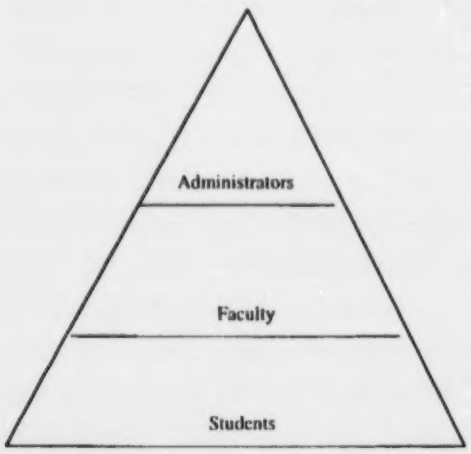
Outcome Phase

The proposed outcome for this model is retention for administrators of color at predominantly White institutions. Components of this model address both issues germane to creating an environment conducive for administrators of color to work, but also explores professional development and growth factors as aspects for retention. Approaching retention in such a dualistic manner gives attention to variables internal and external to the job. The model is based on the notion that if more positive linkages exists between these components, the more likely the administrator of color will stay and grow at the institution.

Figure 2 represents the relationship between the three-targeted groups (students, faculty, and administrators), if all three are included in the representation and retention process. Students of color for two reasons represent the bottom of the pyramid. First, this

group ideally should be the largest represented on campus. Second, students are the foundation for any representation measurement of diversity. Faculty are in the middle of the pyramid because research suggest that the representation for faculty of color can enhance the representation of students (Turner & Myers, 2000). Not only does the representation for faculty of color attract more students, but it is also attractive for administrators of colors as well. Administrators of color are at the top of the pyramid because they would represent the smallest group as it relates to representation. Additionally, they are at the top because they are involved in policy development and implementation that can shape the representation of the other two groups. This research argues that not only should retention for administrators of color be included in the overall efforts of the college or university, but also offers it as the new test of diversity. The number of people of color elevated to positions of authority is a good indicator of institutions' commitment to diversity.

Figure 2. Three-Tiered Approach to Diversity



Conclusion and Implications

A major challenge for this paper was to apply findings from past studies to build a model, and at the same time produce actionable strategies for colleges and universities. This was achieved by identifying components for this model that could be implemented. This paper used methods through which theory is translated into practice to develop the core of the model. Further, the four phases captures the major dimensions of retention, both internal and external to the position. The researcher came to this topic because of the increasing interests of colleges and universities to achieve diversity through retention. Previously, when utilizing this approach, most of the emphasis was placed on students and faculty, with little attention placed on those who develop and implement policy -- administrators. In this sense, this work was aimed at producing useful information about retaining administrators of color, but also to show how this may help increase the retention of students and faculty.

This paper is the first step in a long process of refining the properties of this model and empirically testing hypotheses about their interactions. The next step will consist of empirical research that attempts to further classify a diverse set of strategies, operating in different institutional contexts, according to the four phases of this model. The goal is to make certain that the properties of the model can be implemented at most, if not all colleges and universities. One empirical test for this model will be the degree to which the proposed properties can fit the variation of institutional types in academe.

The initial approach to this research was a multi-year examination of strategies for retaining African American administrators at predominantly White institutions. Consequently, this focus provided a unique opportunity to explore retention. If this initial

research was productive, it applies to other people of color, as well as various institutional settings. Another component of the empirical research will be aimed at developing fine distinctions within and across components of this model based on how they actually operate. In conceptualizing properties for this model they were done singly in order to make the distinctions among them clearer. However, it is understood that when choosing from a menu of options, key stakeholders often choose a combination of strategies for achieving a particular goal. Albeit, the model is set up for key stakeholders to select a dominant approach, but others approaches may be used to supplement or follow the primary one. This line of research will not only identify the different ways that these properties can be used with one another, but also various options for use within each phase.

Despite the number of unanswered questions and the size of the future research agenda, the focus on retaining administrators of color at PWIs is a productive one. Because it seeks to develop a predictive framework that links the major properties of previous research, it holds the potential for producing a theoretically richer generation of knowledge on retention. Yet the ability to provide the higher and postsecondary education community with new insight, beyond that gained from other theories or analytical frameworks, may be the strongest test of whether this model constitutes a valid depiction of retention for administrators of color and its effects.

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